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221103Z Sep 03

UNCLAS COLOMBO 001644

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

TOPEC

PLEASE PASS TO PEACE CORPS FOR DIRECTOR GADDI VASQUEZ  
FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [CE](#)

SUBJECT: PEACE CORPS VISIT TO SRI LANKA

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED -- PROTECT ACCORDINGLY.

[1](#)1.

(SBU) I was delighted when we met in July that you were enthusiastic about a possible Peace Corps return to Sri Lanka. After arriving here and getting a sense of the on-the-ground situation, I was even more excited about the possibilities for Peace Corps. This country has an historic opportunity in front of it -- the chance to put behind 20 years of ruinous civil strife and build a democratic prosperous nation for all Sri Lankans. Many of the areas which Sri Lankans identify as crucial in their plans for the future--such as upgrading the country's English language capabilities--are areas where Peace Corps has great strengths.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Your assessment team has just left and I wanted to let you know how pleased I was with the outcome of their two-week visit. The team, after meetings in Colombo and extensive travel around the country, told me that they intend to recommend to you that Peace Corps reopen in Sri Lanka. This is indeed good news. I fully understand that there are budget and programming issues to be considered and that a reopening is not a sure thing. I want you to know, however, that my staff and I are committed to working closely with Peace Corps in the coming next months as the concept of a Peace Corps reopening hopefully moves from idea to reality.

[1](#)3. (SBU) We were all very impressed with the professionalism and enthusiasm of Robert Reid and his team. This reflects well on Peace Corps and only increased our delight at the prospect of welcoming Peace Corps to the country team here.

[1](#)4. (U) Best regards.

LUNSTEAD